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THE  
ANCIENT  
AND  
PRESENT STATE  
OF  
POLAND.

GIVING

A short, but exact, Account of the Scituation of that Country. The Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants. The several Successions of their Kings. Their Religion, &c.

*Drawn out of their best Historians.*

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To which is added,  
An Impartial Account of the Death of the late King, and of the present Election, as it now stands.

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LONDON,  
Printed for E. Whitlock, near Stationers-Hall, 1697.





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TO THE  
READER.

**T**HE Affairs of Poland being, at this juncture, the common Subject of our Discourses and Expectations, upon the happy Determining whereof, 'tis thought, the future Peace, Quiet and Prosperity, of Europe will, in a great measure, depend; The following Account may perhaps be acceptable to the Publick. It treats first in general of POLAND, how Bounded and Divided. Afterwards of the Nature of the Country, and Manners of the People, the Election of their Kings, their Government, and their Religion. These are the principal Heads upon which we make our Enquiries of any Country and People. They are handled so briefly and succinctly,

TO the READER.

*as not to be tedious to the Reader, yet, 'tis hoped,  
to his Satisfaction. There is added an Ac-  
count of the Death of the late King, and of  
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THE

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T H E  
Ancient and Present State  
O F  
P O L A N D, &c.

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C H A P. I.

Of Poland.

**P**oland is an Elective Monarchy, comprehending the Antient *Sarmatia Europæa*, and the Eastern part of *Germany*, towards the *Vistula*. It is called by the Natives *Polska*, and has taken its Name from the Word *Pole*, or *Pola*; which, in the *Slavonian* Language, signifie, an Hunting Country; all this State consisting of vast Plains, Fields and Woods, proper for Hunting. It is much greater, and more considerable than it was, since *Lithuania*, and several other Provinces, have been added: For before it only contain'd what we now call the *Great*, and the *Lesser Poland*: But with these Additions, 'tis one of the greatest Kingdoms in *Europe*. *Moscovy* and *Tartary* lie to the East; *Hungary*, *Transilvania* and *Moldavia* to the South; *Germany* to the West; and the *Baltick* Sea, *Livonia*, and a part of *White Russia*, or *Moscovy*, to the North. This State may be divided into the *Kingdom of Poland*, and the *Great Dutchy of Lithuania*. The *Kingdom of Poland* is subdivided into *Great* and *Lesser Poland*. The *Lesser Poland* lies

betwixt *Hungary*, *Silesia* and *Russia*: In it is *Cracow*, the Capital City of all the Kingdom, and *Sandomirz*. *Great Poland* is betwixt *Germany*, *Pomerania*, *Silesia* and the *Lesser Poland*; and has the Cities of *Poznan*, *Kalisch*, *Gnesna*, *Lencici*, *Lublin* and *Sirad*: It contains also the Provinces of *Mazovia*, where is *Warsaw* and *Plesko*; *Cujavia*, where is *Uladislaw*; *Royal Prussia*, which has *Dantzick*, *Elbing*, *Thorn*, &c. and *Black Russia*, with the Cities of *Leopold*, and *Prezmissle*, in *Latin Premissia*. *Lithuania* has in it the Cities of *Vilna*, *Nowgrade*, *Poloczke*, *Minx*, *Wisepezsk*, *Micislaw*, *Breslaw*, &c. and is divided into *Volbinia*, with the Cities of *Lucho*, *Kiow*, &c. *Podolia*, with the Cities of *Caminiec*, *Braclaw*, &c. *Polesia*, where is *Bressici*; and *Samogitia*, the Capital of which is *Medniki*. *Poland* is otherwise divided into Thirty four *Palatinates*, or *Governments*: Every *Palatine* has his *Chastellans* under him, and they are Captains and *Governors* of Cities, and are about Eighty seven in all. There may be an Ecclesiastical Division of *Poland*, according to their two *Archbishopricks* of *Gnesna* and *Leopold*. They had formerly *Riga* too, but that City is now in possession of the *Suedes*. The *Archbishop* of *Gnesna* is the First Senator; he ascends the Throne upon the King's Death, and governs till another is chose. There are Fifteen *Bishopricks* in *Poland*, many *Abbies*, and the Universities of *Cracow*, *Royaumont*, *Coningsberg*, *Zamoiski*, &c.

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## CHAP. II.

### *Of the Country of Poland.*

THE Air of *Poland* is very pure; and the Land so good, that it is almost impossible to conceive the Quantity of Corn they send to other Countries. There are vast Plains, as far as you can see, intermix'd with Rivers, and many Woods; which are to the Advantage, as well as Beauty, of the Country. This chiefly concerns *Great Poland*: The *Lesser* is as fruitful, though not so compact: In it are Mines of Silver and Iron, and Vines, and excellent Fruits. With these Advantages, they likewise enjoy a temperate Air.



Air. But it is not so in *Lithuania*: The Commodities in which they trade, are, Honey, Wax, Venison, Fish, Timber, Hemp, Corn, the Skins of Martins, Castors, Bears, Elkes, and other Wild Beasts; as also Copper, Lead, Iron, and chiefly Steel.

The Nobility only are considerable in *Poland*: The Third Estate are, in a manner, Slaves. The Gentlemen of *Poland* are large, and strong; dexterously wield the Scimitar; Learned in Foreign Languages; very liberal, brave Men; and hearty *Roman Catholics*. But it must farther be own'd, that they are fierce, and proud; that they sacrifice every thing to their own Opinions; and own no Sovereign, but Liberty. From hence have come those Advantages the *Tartars* and *Moscovites* have had formerly against them; and the Reasons why the King of *Sueden*, with about Forty Thousand Men, reduced their Country to the last Extremity, when their Armies consisted of Two Hundred Thousand Fighting Men: Which could proceed from no other Cause, than a Mis-understanding among themselves, and the little Power they give their Prince: Infomuch, that before the Senate can be assembled, and the Nobility have resolved to go to War, the Enemy has Time to do what he will in the Field; and there are no strong Places to hinder his going to the Gates of *Warsaw*. However, the *Polanders* are good Soldiers, especially the Horse, who are armed with a Carabine, a Case of Pistols, an Axe on one side, and Scymitar on the other, a Quiver full of Arrows and a Bow at their Backs, which they use after the Discharge of their Fire-Arms, when the Enemy flies. The *Polanders* love Travelling; they are faithful, obliging, and civil to Strangers: They are rich in their Habits, and splendid in their Entertainments, which they make freely for their Friends.

Their Marriages, especially in the Countries of *Prussia*, *Samogitia* and *Lithuania*, are as follows; The Young Women do not marry before the Age of Twenty four Years; or, at least, not before they have wrought with their own Hands Cloth and Garments to present every one that attends their Bridegroom to Church. When the Father seeks a Wife for his Son, he considers neither Beauty, nor Fortune; but only her Manners, whether she be of an agreeable Age, if she has a Body likely to conceive and bear Children. Having found such an one, she is taken away by some of the Bridegroom's Kindred; after which, they apply for the Father's Consent, to compleat the Marriage. These People retain still many Relicks of *Pagan* Superstitions; for, in the  
Functions

Functions or Ceremonies of Matrimony, they make the Bride go three times round the Fire, then sit down, wash her Feet, and with that Water sprinkle the Bed and all the Moveables that belong to the New-married Couple. They anoint the Bride's Mouth with Honey, cover her Eyes with a Veil, and so lead her Blindfold to all the Doors of the House, which she must strike with her Right Foot. They throw Wheat, Rye, Oats, Barley, Rice and Beans at the Doors, saying, "That the Bride shall never want any of those Grains if she continues devout in her Religion, and takes Care of the Affairs of the Family." That done, they take the Veil from before her Eyes, and have a Banquet: But at Night, when it is time to go to Bed, they dance, and cut off her Hair; then some of the Women wrap her Head in a white Linen Cloth, which she may wear till she have a Son born, for till then she is called a Girl. Lastly, She is taken to her Chamber; where, after being jocularly pinched and beaten, they deliver her to her Bridegroom, who they give to eat Goat or Bears Stones together, instead of Sweet-meats and other Delicacies; which, they are of Opinion, help Procreation; and therefore, in their Marriage-Fests, they have no Flesh of any Creature that was gelt.

They use in their Diet, a good quantity of Saffron and Spices; and spare not for Sugar in many Dishes peculiar to them.

The *Polanders* are very devout, and fast *Wednesdays*, *Fridays* and *Saturdays*; but they scruple not being drunk, and to fight at these times. The Country-People are poor and miserable, and are Masters of nothing they have, but are subject to their Lords, who treat them as Tyrannically as Gally-Slaves. A Gentleman there has Power of Life and Death over those of his Family, and Tenants: And if a Neighbour kills one, and pays the Value set upon him, all is well again: And when they speak of a Gentleman's Riches, they reckon them by his Number of Tenants. The Houses of these miserable Slaves, who work hard, and live upon little, are only of Mud and some Trees to hold up the Roof. The Children sleep and eat with the Swine; and the Master of the House has no other place to eat in, and oftentimes for his Lodging, than the Manger and Rack where his Cattel are kept. 'Tis true, there is sometimes a little Apartment next the Roof, where they have a Stove, and the best of the Family lie upon Skins. They drink Beer, or Mead, but no Water, because 'tis almost all stinking in *Poland*, where it corrupts in the Plains. Their Women are little, not handsom, very simple,  
but



but civil: The *Polanders* love them, but treat them like Servants; and when they return home from the Army, they give them their Right Hands to kiss. They are something jealous, and therefore have no Conversation, but with their next Relations, unless when they are at Balls and Feasts. They go very seldom abroad.

There are no Inns in *Poland*, upon the Road; and therefore, Gentlemen that travel, either lodge with their Friends, or carry their own Provisions along with them, or else lie upon the Country-People, who are obliged to receive them, and that as a Tax upon them. If any of the Nobility are taken in War, the King is obliged to ransom him. Their Language is *Sclavonian*; besides that, they all speak Latin, and most of them understand Foreign Languages.

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### CHAP. III.

#### *Of the Kings of Poland.*

IT is commonly thought the *Huns* were the first People that came into *Poland*; and the *Sclavonians*, who drove thence the *Suedes* and *Goths*, and some others that inhabited from the *Vistula*, to the *Elbe*. *Lechus* made himself Master of it about the Year 550, and began the Monarchy of *Poland*. This Prince resided at *Gnesna*, a City which he built, and so named from an Eagle's Nest that was found on the top of a Tree where it was building; the Word, in the *Polish* Language, signifying a Nest: Whence came the Arms of the Kingdom to be a Spread-Eagle.

The first Governors of this Country did not assume to themselves the Title of Kings, but only that of Dukes; and the first Form of Government was very inconstant; for, after the Race of *Lechus*, (though it be uncertain how many there were, and how long they govern'd, and what were their Atchievements,) Twelve Governors (in their Language called *Vayvods*) administer'd the Government; who having refin'd this barbarous People by good Laws and Constitutions, at last were divided among themselves. Whereupon, the *Poles* elected one *Cracus*; who having restor'd the Common-  

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wealth

wealth to its former State; built the City of *Cracovia*, (now *Cracow*,) calling it after his own Name, and making it his Place of Residence. His youngest Son, *Lechus* the Second, to obtain the Principality, Murther'd his eldest Brother; but the Fact being discover'd, he was banish'd. To him, succeeded *Venda*, a Virgin, only Child of *Cracus*. After her Death, the Government return'd to *Vayvods*; which continued till the *Poles* elected *Premisbus*, a Goldsmith, called also *Lescus* the First; who obtain'd the Crown by a Stratagem that sav'd the *Poles* when they were in distress; the Manner of which was thus; "They being in the Field, against the *Meravians*, and finding themselves much inferiour in Number, this Goldsmith bethought himself of a Way to make the *Polish* Army seem more numerous; which was, by making a great Number of Shields of Barks of Trees, and afterwards smearing them over with Galls and Quick-Silver; which making a great Shew, and the *Meravians* really believing the *Poles* were equal in Number, stood gazing upon the Shields, till the *Polish* Army had Time to retire."

This Duke having no Issue, an Horse-Race was instituted, to determine the Succession; and three Candidates appearing, one of them thinking by Subtilty to obtain the Crown, laid several Iron Spikes in the Way where the Race was to be run; which the other two knowing nothing of, they gall'd, and stop'd in their Career, so that the Politician came first to the Goal: But the Falacy being soon detected, a poor Country Fellow, that ran along with them, on Foot, only for his Diversion, was chosen, and the other kill'd upon the Spot.

This Duke's Name was *Lescus* the Second; and who (as some say) was afterwards slain in the Wars against *Charles the Great*.

To him succeeded his Son, *Lescus* the Third; who having appeas'd *Charles the Great* with Presents, made Peace with him, either as an unequal Ally, or by acknowledging himself his Vassal. This Duke left *Poland* to his Son *Papiell*; but gave the neighbouring Countries of *Pomerania* and *Cassovia* to his Natural Children.

After him, succeeded his Son, *Papiell* the Second; a very ill Man; who, by the Persuasions of his Lady, murther'd his Father's Brothers: Whereupon, 'tis reported, that out of their dead Bodies (which he would not suffer to be interr'd) came forth a great Number of huge Rats, which devour'd him, and his whole Family.



mily, notwithstanding all imaginable means were used to prevent it.

After his Death, came an *Inter-regnum*, full of Troubles, till the *Poles* declar'd *Piaſtus*, a Country-Fellow, born at *Cruswitz*, for their Prince; from whom, ever after, if any of the Natives obtained the Royal Dignity, they were call'd *Piaſti*. His Poſterity reign'd for a long time in *Poland*; from whom alſo deſcended the Dukes of *Lignitz* and *Brieg*, in *Sileſia*. 'Tis ſaid, this Duke was One Hundred and Twenty Years old when he died.

His Son *Zigmoritus* was a brave and Warlike Prince; to whom ſucceeded his Son

*Leſcus* the Fourth; of a peaceable Temper.

Of much the ſame was his Son *Zickmorviſtus*, who ſucceeded him. This Prince had but one Son, who being born blind, was, in the Seventh Year of his Age, (in which Year, according to the Cuſtom of thoſe Times, his Head was to be ſhav'd, and he to receive his Name,) reſtor'd to his Sight; which was then taken for an Omen, that he ſhould be enlighten'd with the Chriſtian Faith. His Name was *Miciſlaus*, or *Miſcho*; who began his Reign in 964. and was the firſt Chriſtian Duke of *Poland*.

*Boleſlaus Chrobry*, his Son, ſucceeded him in 999, and was created King by the Emperor *Otho* the Third, who viſited the Tomb of *St. Adelbert*, kill'd in *Pruffia*.

He left the Crown to *Miciſlaus* the Second:

Who likewise left it to *Cafimir*; who being an Infant, his Mother *Rixa* took upon her the Adminiſtration of the Government; but the *Poles* being diſ-ſatisfied with her, ſhe was forc'd to flee, with her Son, into *Germany*, who, in his Journey afterwards to *France*, aſſum'd the Order and Habit of a Monk. During his Abſence there were great Diſturbances in *Poland*; whereupon, by the Mediation of the Pope, the *Poles* prevail'd upon *Cafimir* to leave his Monastery, and to accept of the Crown; but upon this Condition, That they were yearly to contribute a Farthing for each Head, except thoſe of the Nobility and Clergy, towards the maintaining a perpetual Burning Lamp in the Church of *St. Peter's* at *Rome*; and moreover, cauſe their Heads to be ſhaved about their Ears, like Monks.

His Son, *Boleſlaus* the Second, ſucceeded him. This Prince, ſurnam'd *The Cruel*, put to death *Stanislaus*, Biſhop of *Cracow*; and,

as a Punishment for his Crimes, *Poland* lost the Title of King for a considerable Time.

The next King was *Uladislaus* the First, Brother to the fore-going *Boleslaus*.

He was succeeded by his Son *Boleslaus* the Third, a brave Soldier, who obtain'd a signal Victory over the Emperor *Henry* the Fifth, in the *Dogs Field*, near *Breslau*. There never was a Prince in *Poland* more famous than this; he fought 45 Battels with Success, except the last with the *Red Russians*, which was lost through the Cowardice of the *Vayvod* of *Cracovia*; to whom the King, for Recompence, sent a Hare's Skin and a Spinning-Wheel; which so troubl'd him, that he hang'd himself: And the King likewise was so concern'd at his Defeat, that he not long after died with Grief.

His Son *Uladislaus* the Second succeeded him.

After whom came *Boleslaus Crispus*, his Brother; who receiv'd a great Overthrow from the *Prussians*, his Army having been mis-lead into Moors and Bogs, through the Treachery of a Guide.

Next succeeded his Brother *Micislaus Senior*; but he was soon deposed for Male-Administration.

Then came his Brother, *Casimir* the Second, to be elected; who was only famous for chastising the *Prussians*.

His Son *Lescus* the Fifth, Sur-nam'd *The White*, was fain to contend with the banish'd *Micislaus* for the Kingdom.

Next him, came his Son *Boleslaus* the Fifth, Sur-nam'd *The Chaste*; in whose Reign the *Tartars* committed prodigious Barbarities in *Poland*, and from thence made an Inroad into *Silesia*, where, in a Battle fought near *Lignitz*, they slew so many of the Inhabitants, that they fill'd nine great Sacks with their Ears, though they did cut off but one from each Head.

To him succeeded his Cousin *Lescus*, Sur-nam'd *The Black*, who was very fortunate in his Wars; though the Civil Commotions, and frequent Incursions of the *Tartars*, occasion'd great Disturbances in his Kingdom.

After his Death, there were great Contests about the Regency; till at last, *Premislaus*, Lord of Great *Poland*, got the Upper Hand, assuming the Title of King, which had not been used for near Two Hundred Years before. This Prince was murder'd by some *Brandenburg* Emillaries, after he had reign'd but Seven Months.

Next to him, was elected *Uladislaus Locticus*, who was depos'd for Male-Administration.

Then



Then came *Wenceslaus*, King of *Bohemia*, to be chosen ; but after his Death, *Lacticus* was restor'd.

After him, his Son *Casimir the Great* succeeded ; who subdu'd all *Russia*, and united it to the Kingdom of *Poland*. He dying, the Male Race of *Piasus* lost the Crown of *Poland*, which, after this *Casimir*, devolv'd to *Lewis*, King of *Hungary*, who left two Daughters.

*Hedwigis*, the youngest of which, was declared Queen, and married *Jagello*, Duke of *Lithuania*, who was then Baptized, and made a Christian. Upon this Marriage he was Acknowledged, and his Countries joined to *Poland* about the year 1386. *Jagello*, who took at his Baptism the Name of *Uladislaus the 4th.* had for his Successor *Uladislaus the 5th.* This King was killed in a Battle against the *Turks* ; in his stead *Casimir the 4th.* was made King of *Poland*, to whom Succeeded his Son *John Albert* ; after whom came his Brother *Alexander*, who Reigned only five Years, when came *Sigismund the First*, one of the most famous Princes in his time ; his Son *Sigismund the 2d.* was next Elected, who died without Issue, and thereby the Male Race of the *Jagellonick* Family was Extinct.

Then the *Polanders* chose *Henry*, Duke of *Anjou*, Son of *Henry the 2d.* of *France*, King, and he was Crowned the 15th. of *Feb.* 1574. But this Prince having Notice of the Death of his Brother, *Charles the Ninth*, King of *France*, he went to receive that Crown in 1576.

Then one Party of the Electors set up *Stephen Batori*, Prince of *Transilvania* ; and the other, *Maximilian*, Arch-Duke of *Austria* ; which brought a War upon the Country. The First carried it, and died without Childrin, in 1580.

Next *Sigismund the Third*, Son to *John*, King of *Sweden*, was set upon the Throne in 1587, but the King, his Father, dying soon after, he went to take possession of the Crown of *Sweden*. Some time afterwards the *Swedes* revolted, and chose *Charles*, Prince of *Sudermania*, his Uncle, for their King. They went to War with *Sigismund*, took *Riga* from him in 1625, and he died in 1632. *Uladislaus*, his Son, succeeded him, who dying in 1643, they chose in his place *John Casimir* ; he made a voluntary Abdication of the Crown, and had for his Successor *Michael Wittnowizki*, that died in 1672, and *John Sobieski* succeeded him, and died in 1696. This Prince was the Third of that Name ; he was the youngest Son

Son of *Sobieski*, Palatin of *Cracovia*, &c. and of a Daughter of *Stanislaus Zolkiewski*, Grand Chancellor, and Grand General of the Crown. He was made Grand Marshal of the Crown, *August 24th. 1665*, and Grand Master of the King's Household, Palatin of *Cracovia*, &c. He recovered 60 Towns from the rebellious *Cossacks* in the *Ukrain* in 1667, he held out *Podbois* against the *Tartars*, and two years after he took from them and the *Cossacks* all the Palatinate of *Bracklaw*, in the *Lower Podolia*. He defeated the *Turks* in 1671, during the siege of *Leopold*, upon the *Peltaw*, in the *Black Russia*, and in 1673 won the famous Battle of *Cherzim*, upon the *Neister*, upon the Frontiers of *Moldavia*: That Battle begun upon a *Saturday*, and was not fully over till within three days after, at what time it was ended by the Surrender of that that Fortrefs. The *Turks* in that Battle lost 8000 *Janisaries*, and 2000 *Spahi's*, which being one of the most celebrated Victories in this Age, was gained upon the 11th. of *Nov.* the next day after the decease of King *Michael Korilut Wiesnowiski*. The Grand Marshal *Sobieski* was Elected, *May 10. 1674*, but was not Crowned till fifteen Months after, during which time he gained several Advantages over the *Turks*, and constrained them to make a Peace at *Zurowna*. Every one knows how much he contributed towards the Raising the Siege of *Viena*, being himself in Person at the Action, wherein he acquired great Renown. He espoused *Mary de la Grange*, the Daughter of the Marquis *d' Arquien*, not long since made a Cardinal, of the Noble Family of *de la Grange* in *Nivernois*; she was the Widow of Prince *Zamoiski*. The King had several Children by her, and among the rest three Princes, of which the Eldest has the Honour to be Brother-in-Law to the Emperor, by Marrying one of the Princesses of *Neuburgs*: Lastly, to compleat his Encomium, he spoke several Languages, and was a great Lover of Books, and Learned Men.



## CHAP. IV.

*Of the Government, and Manner of Election in Poland.*

**P**oland is a State where the Government is Monarchical, and Aristocratical. It is Monarchical, because they have a King ; and Aristocratical, by reason their King is not an Absolute Prince, that can Dispose and Resolve upon Affairs by his own Power without Consent of the Senators. I have already taken Notice, that the Archbishop of *Gnesna* is Primate of the Kingdom, and has the Administration, during an *Inter-regnum*. He Assembles the States to Elect a new King, and Appoints both Time and Place. After every one has given his Suffrage, the King is Elected by Majority of Voices. This Prelate declares him, brings him forth into the middle of the Assembly, then he is Conducted to the Church, where, after Mass, he Swears to preserve the Privileges of the Kingdom, and to keep the Established Laws, which oblige him to do nothing without Consent of the States. Upon Matters of moment the King sends, by his Chancellor, Letters to the Palatins, called *Instructionis Litteræ*, because they mention the State of those Affairs his Majesty has to propose to the Assembly, and Appoints them a Time to come to Court : When they receive these Letters, every one of the Senators particularly examines the Nature, Quality, Subject and Consequences of the Propositions, to which he has a Liberty to Answer as he shall think fitting, whether with respect to the publick Good, or his own private Interest. The King sends Letters also into the *Palatinates*, where the Nobility assemble to choose one among them, a Person of Merit, that is sufficient and capable to speak in behalf of their Province, in whom they are universally to agree to : For if it happens there be one Negative in the Assembly, 'tis impossible to proceed farther, the Deputy cannot go, and that Province has no Voice in the States. After these Provincial Assemblies are over, the Senators and Deputies appear at Court at the Time prefixed, where the King, attended by his Chancellor, signifies to them first the Cause of their Meeting, then hears and receives their Advices, but they

they must be unanimous in their Resolutions, or, as they say, *Nemine reclamante, nemine dissentiente*, or the Diet breaks up, every one goes home again, and the Propositions come to nothing. Among the Cities, there are only *Cracow*, *Danzic* and *Vilna* that have the Privilege of sending Deputies to the Diet. The ordinary Matters are Transacted before the Judges established in every *Palatinate*, and, as in the Provincial Assemblies, all manner of Persons have Liberty to be present, and hear what is proposed, the meanest Country-man may know all. So when ever they Treat of War, the Enemy is advised and informed of their Designs, their Strength, and how to ruine them. The King's best Revenue consists in the Salt-works near *Cracow*, in the Mines of Copper, Lead and Silver, in the Fishery, and Tribute of the Jews. His Revenues are computed at 600000 Crowns *per Ann.* The Profit arising from his Demesnes are commonly given away in Pensions and Bounties, to the Palatines, Chastellains, and other Great Men, to engage them to his Interests. Most of what comes into his own Coffers, is either laid up, or Expended in the Purchase of Estates for his younger Sons; his Daughters being Married at the Publick Charge; and the Expences of his Household defrayed by his Subjects.

He has the Nomination of the Bishopricks, and of all the Dignities of the Kingdom, and of the Commissions of War and Revenue, the Courts of Justice, and Civil Government. The chiefest Dignities are the Lieutenant, the Great Master of the King's Household, the Great Treasurer, the Great Provost, &c. These Places are both for the Kingdom of *Poland*, and Dutchy of *Lithuania*, where the King goes every two or three Years to hold a Diet; and as soon as he enters upon the Country, he is only served by the Officers of the Dutchy. The Grand Marshal of the Crown, or Crown General, has very great Advantages, and his Office gives him the Title also of Grand Master of the King's House, Great Master of the Ceremonies, Introducator of Ambassadors, Judge and Master of the Civil Government; he can make Laws, and has Power of Life and Death in him. The Generals of *this Kingdom*, and of *Lithuania*, may fight as they see Cause, and have Sovereign Power in the Camp. Besides the Palatines and Chastellains that I have spoke of, there are in all the Cities, Burghers, Judges and Magistrates. But there lies an Appeal from them to *Cracow* for Great *Poland*, and to *Lublin* for the Lesser *Poland* and *Russia*.

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Tho' the King of *Poland* has the name of a King and the first Dukes were in truth Kings without the Title ; yet at present he is nothing less, being not allowed to make Peace or War, to impose Taxes, make Laws, alienate any of his Demesnes, or in short, to do any thing of importance which concerns the Publick, without the consent of the Diet. And he does not only swear to do all this, but allows their Disobedience, in case he violates his Oath, which makes the Subjects the Princes Judges, and this Kingdom a meer Aristocracy, or knot of petty Kingdoms under one Head.

The First Dukes indeed were absolute Princes, and ruled after a Despotical manner, having power not only of the Estates of their Subjects, but of Life and Death without formalities of Law ; yet when they once became Elective they lost much of that power, which decayed so by degrees, that at last it came to nothing, *magni nominis umbra*. A Diminution which began first in the times of *Lewis* of *Hungary*, and *Jagello* of *Lithuania*, who to gain the succession to the Kingdom contrary to Law, the one for his Daughter, the other for his Son, parted with many of their Royalties and Prerogatives to buy the Voices of the Nobility. Since which time the Nobility in all their Elections have limited and restrained the Kings Authority, and enlarged their own. Yet the King once chosen and enthroned hath sole Power in many things, as in assembling the Diets, choosing Peculiar Councillors, disposing absolutely of his Vassals and the Revenues of the Crown, to what use he pleaseth. He also is sole Judge of the Nobility in criminal Causes, which is a strong Bridle upon them. By which, and either joyning with the Clergy, or well forming his party among the Nobility, he may do many things not strictly legal ; the power and influence he hath in the publick Government being in proportion to his Abilities and Dexterity in managing them.

The Forces of this Kingdom consist most in Horse, whereof they are able to raise 160000. Their Infantry are generally *German* or *Hungarians*, whom they hire for money, and are like other mercenary Soldiers. For the raising the Horse, the Gentlemen of the Country are obliged by their Tenure, not only to serve in Person for the Defence of the Realm, but to maintain a certain number of Horse in continual readiness, especially in those parts next the Tartars, where their numbers are great, and with whom they many times joyn to afflict and harass their own Country.

## CHAP. V.

*The Religion of the Polanders.*

THE ancient Inhabitants of the Country were *Idolaters*, and worshiped the same Gods as the *Greeks*, the *Romans* and *Germans*. *Tertullian* assures us in his Treatise against the *Jews*, that the Gospel was then preached in *Sarmatia* : But we know it was not received in that *Sarmatia*, which is now *Poland* till the 10th. Century. *Micislaus*, or *Misko* I. married *Debrau*, the Daughter of *Boleslaus*, Duke of *Bohemia*; and was Baptized the 7th. of March in the Year 965. and 966. since that time the *Polanders* have always continued Christians. *Lutheranism* and *Calvinism* have been received among them, but have not not prevailed there as in other Countries. They came acquainted with them from *John Huss*, and others in the 15th. Century, who came from *Bohemia* into this Country. *Gregory Paul* Minister of *Cracow*, preached *Arrianism* there about the Year 1566. but was driven thence by *Sigismond*, with *George Blandrata*, *Lelius Socinus*, *Valentinus Gentilis*, and some others. *Faustus Socinus*, who has given the name to the *Socinians*, came thither afterwards and left his Disciples who are to be found there to this day. There are likewise some *Lutherans*, *Calvinists* and *Anabaptists* to be found in other parts of *Lithuania*. They have among them also *Schismaticks*, *Greeks*, and many *Jews* that are in some credit for their Wealth. They enjoy some particular Priviledges, but you see them always intent upon their Profit and Usury. They live miserable without Estates in Land, and only enrich themselves by Trade. The *Polanders* are zealous in their Religion, hear Mass daily, and practice great Austerities upon themselves during Lent.



## G H A P. VI.

*A Relation of the Death of John Sobieski, late King of Poland : With an Account of the Present Election, as it now stands.*

**J**ohn Sobieski the late King of Poland, departed this Life the 17th of June, 1696. about nine a Clock at Night, leaving behind him his Queen and 3 Princes, (*viz.*) James, Alexander and Constantine, with a Princess who is married to the present Elector of Bavaria. In his life time he heaped up vast Riches, and Endeavoured to make the Crown Hereditary, but in vain.

The King being Dead, which was notified by Express to the Cardinal Radziowski Arch-Bishop of Gnesna, Primate of the Kingdom of Poland, and Regent during the *Inter-regnum*, he repaired immediately to the Capitol, and made his publick Entry into Warsaw on the 24th of June, 1696. with the usual Ceremonies ; the first thing he did was to call together the Senators, Principal Ministers and Bishops, who met, and had Conference in his Presence the 28 and 29th of June, 1696. and came to the following Resolutions, (*viz.*) First, To notify the Death of the King to the *Castelleins*, and that the grand Convocation for Electing a new King be fixed upon the 29th of August, 1696. Secondly, That notice be given to the Foreign Princes. Thirdly, That the Frontier Garrisons be reinforced, and the Troops maintained out of the publick Revenue. Fourthly, That the Treasurer of the Crown do regulate the deceased Kings Court. Fifthly, The Cardinal Primate recommended to the Treasurer of the Crown the safety of Trinity Fort, &c. And Sixthly, He sincerely promised to preserve the *Jura Patronatus Regia*.

The Cardinal Primate having thus taken the Government upon him ( which of right belongs to his Eminence during the *Inter-regnum* ) he has managed Affairs there ever since, much in favour of *France*, and against the Interest of the House of *Austria*.

There were at first, several Illustrious Persons proposed as Candidates to fill the Throne, (*viz.*) Prince *James*, Prince *Alexander*, two of the late King Sons, the Elector of *Bavaria*, the Prince of *Vaudemont*, the Duke of *Lorrain*, the Grand Marshal of the Crown, Prince *Sapieha*, the Prince of *Newbourg*, the Prince of *Transilvania*, with the Prince of *Conti*, the Prince *Don Livio Odescalchi*, and the Prince of *Baden* the Elector of *Saxony*, not then being talked of.

There being so many Pretenders, the Kingdom fell into Faction, and he that had the most Money seemed to have the best Interest, in the meantime the Armies of *Poland* and *Lithuania* Confederated, and Committed abundance of Hostilities, doing a World of Mischief, being supported under hand by the Abbot of *Polignac* Ambassador of *France*, with Money. This put the Kingdom into a Flame, and occasioned the general Convocation to be put off from time to time ; but at length the Crown generally prevailed with the Confederate Armies to submit, having procured a round Sum of Money of the Queen *Dowager*, to be distributed amongst them.

This being done, matters became Calm ; and the particular Diets were held, which terminated, but not without heats.

The general Diet was appointed, and the overture made on the 15<sup>th</sup> of *May*, 1697. with the accustomed Ceremony, first the Popes Nuncio solemnised the Mass of the holy Ghost. After which the Bishop of *Poscom* made a Sermon exhorting the Assembly to mind the interest of the republick, and lay aside all private Advantages, and to Advance to the Throne whom they should deem most Worthy. The



The first thing the Assembly did, was to make choice of a Speaker, but that took up a considerable time, because all the Deputies were not at first came up, but in Conclusion the *Sieur Bilinski*, a Person of Polite Learning and Ability was Elected, but the lower Nobility being Jealous that he was in the interest of *France*, threatned to cut him in Pieces if he should move the advancing a *French Man* to the Crown: However we find since that he did not in the least promote the Interest of the Prince of *Conti*, which plainly Demonstrates that he favoured the promoting of such as should be proposed by the Emperor and his Allies. Note that this Election began the first of *June*, New Stile, and lasted till the 16<sup>th</sup> of the same Month before the Suffrages could be collected and told, this Affair which was only looked upon as a preliminary, took up a whole Month.

The next thing they were to do, was to give Audiences to the Foreign Ministers, which they Commenced, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of *June*; *Siegnior Davia* the Popes Nuncio being first admitted, and next to him the Bishop of *Passau*, the Emperors Extraordinary Ambassador, and the rest in their turns.

The One and Twentieth of *June* being come, none could then Conjecture who should be Elevated to the Crown, many of those first proposed, not being so much as mentioned.

Prince *Don Livio Odeschalchi*, who had proposed the most advantageous terms to the Republick, was also not thought fit to Sway the Crown: They wanting a Warlike Prince, whose Name was Terrible to the Infidels, to be King.

As for the Duke of *Lorrain*, there was two main Obstacles that hindred them from making Choice of him: First, his tender Age; and the second, because the House of *Lorrain* having their Territories, could not Expend such large Sums as was necessary for the purchasing Suffrages.

And upon the whole, it was thought that the Party of  
the

the Prince of *Conti*, and that of the Prince of *Baden* was the strongest ; yet some were of Opinion, that the Party of Prince *James* did over-balance that of the Prince of *Conti* : so that the *Poles* were afraid then of a double Election, unless they could pitch upon a Third Person to the satisfaction of both sides ; which was hardly to be done.

There was no Discourse all this while of the Heroick Elector of *Saxony* ; but he being arrived at *Dresden*, which is his Capitol, the beginning of June, he mustered his Troops, to the number of 10000 Men, and instead of going for *Hungary* to Command the Imperial Army, he marched with them to *Breslau* in *Silesia*, where he explained his design of standing a Candidate for the Crown of *Poland* ; which was an Amazement to most People, because of his Religion, he being looked upon to have been a Protestant ; but it soon appeared otherwise ; for he had turned *Roman Catholick* at *Vienna* 18 Months before, which induced the Pope's Nuncio to speak in his behalf at the Diet ; so that then it was no Secret.

The Day of Election being come, which was the Twenty Sixth of June, they drew out into the Field, and being come to the Place appointed, the Bishop of *Ploscow*, and those of his Palatine, flung up their Caps, and cried out, *Vivat Candens* ; but they were immediately surrounded, and threatened to be Cut in pieces with Cimitars, it not being their turn to speak.

*Conti's* Party finding thus, that they were not strong enough to Elect him, sent to the French Ambassador to let him know, that if he would consent to it, they would give their Suffrages to Elect any other, offering to return him the immense Sums which they had received of him, but he insisted to have the Prince of *Conti* Elected, according to his Instructions from his Master.

Whilst



Whilst these things were in Agitation, the Primate and the Bishop *Ploscow* Elected the Prince of *Conti*, and caused him to be proclaimed, and immediately retired out of the Field, and went to the Cathedral at *Warsaw*, where they Sung *Te Deum*.

Upon which the Favourers of the House of *Austria*, finding that the Prince of *Conti* had but Fourteen Voices more than the Elector of *Saxony*, or Prince *James*, they resolved to unite their Suffrages in favour of his Electoral Highness, by which means he had One and Twenty Voices more than *Conti*.

This raised up the drooping Spirits of those that were in the Interest of the H. of *Austria* against that of *Bourbon*, to that degree, that they caused instantly the Bish. of *Cujavia*, at the Head of that Party, to repair in all haste to the Cathedral at *Warsaw*, where he entred with a Numerous Train; but finding the Doors shut by order of the Cardinal Primate, the Popes Nuncio caused them to be broke open; and Proclaimed *Frederick* August Elector of *Saxony*, King, with accustomed Ceremony, *Te Deum* was likewise Sung the same day.

The Elector's Party went into the Field the 27<sup>th</sup> and the 28<sup>th</sup>, but that of the Prince of *Conti* never appeared after the first day, so that his Party visibly fell off daily, particularly the Senators; so that Two Hundred Forty Three Standards declared for his Electoral Highness, and but Thirty Four for *Conti*.

The Party of the Elector upon this drew up the Concorde which the King is to Sign, and agreed to send a formal Deputation to *Breslau*, to invite the Elector to accept of the Crown.

The four Mareschals have declared in his Favour also.

The Bishop of *Cujavia* made a solemn Protestation against the unlawful Election of the Prince of *Conti*, without the gain-saying of any. The Royalists fired through the Windows

dows of the Cardinal Primate's Palace as they passed by, uttering many Contumacious words against his Eminence.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of *July* the great Embassy, consisting of four Senators, accompanied by a great number of the Nobility and Gentry, went from *Warsaw* for *Breslau* in *Silesia*, to Congratulate the New King, and to Conduct him to *Crakau* to be Crowned.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of *July* the Waywade of *Vilna*, the great Mareschal of *Lithuania*, the Crown Treasurer, and the Bishop of *Ploscow*, as Partisans of the Prince of *Conti*, conferred with the Generals who are for the Elector of *Saxony*, in order to adjust matters, but to no purpose, the Adherents of *Conti* refusing to desert him, threatening the Republick with a War from *France*, though he should be necessitated to make Peace with the Allies.

The Minister of *Saxony* having received a Million of Crowns, distributed some of it among the Army, which gained them intirely to the side of his Electoral Highness, and to promise to stand by him with their Lives and Fortunes; and in a word, they made Rejoycings upon his Election, and discharged all their Cannon Thrice, &c.

The Criticks make strange Conjectures at the striking of the Thunder-bolt in the Elector's Closet at *Dresden*, and at the same time in his House at *Vienna*; it being the very hour he was Elected King of *Poland*.

The Elector's Party have left no Stone unturned to bring over *Conti's* Party; and as an Expedient they sent for the Elector's Minister to the place of Election by above an Hundred Deputies, where he produced an Attestation that the Elector his Master was turned *Roman* Catholick, thanked them for their Election, telling them, that his Master, pursuant to his promise, would pay the Ten Millions of *Polish* Florins, that he would maintain Six Thousand Men at his own Charge, &c. Upon which the Party of his Electoral High-



Highness, bound themselves with an Association to stand by him, and not change their Minds.

I presume it will not be amiss, to insert here the substance of a Letter, which the Cardinal primate sent the day after the Election to the Elector, wherein among other things he inserts what follows, *viz.*

*We thought not to dispose of the Care of our Kingdom to your Electoral Highness, who is now taken up with Heroick Actions against the Common Enemy of Christendom, for which reason we request your Electoral Highness, not to accept of this nomination or unanimous, but according to your innate Generosity, and out of Love to the neighbourhood, to let us remain in Peace with our free Election of our King De Conty, if your Electoral Highness make any ground on the unity of the Generals, and the great Emulation between them and the Republick; you may be assured the more firmly, we have resolved not to accept of the King by them proposed, &c.*

The Express dispatched with this Letter, returned with it unopened, because the Address was to the Elector, and not King.

The Cardinal Primate has remonstrated to all the Neighbouring Princes; that the Election of the Elector of Saxony to be King of Poland is void, it being contrary to the known Laws of the Land, but they take no Notice of it. But on the other hand the Czar of Muscovy and others threaten the republick with a perpetual War; in case they should Advance a French Man to the Throne.

The Elector of *Saxony* now King of *Poland* being gone from *Breslau* to *Tarnowitz* ; he had advice that the great *Embassy* of *Poland*, were approaching on the 21<sup>st</sup> and on the 23<sup>d</sup>, his Majesty rendred himself without the Gate ; where an Elevated place was Erected, covered with green Bows ; and hung with Tapistry, and a Throne Erected under a Velvet Canopy richly Adorned. The King was very finely Dressed, his Cloaths being Decked with Diamonds ; so that his Suit was said to be worth a Million. The *Embassy* being arrived, they were Conducted to the King with the Sound of Trumpets and Kettle Drums. His Majesty stood under the Canopy with the Bishop of *Passau* on his Right Hand, and the Prince of *Furstemburg* on his Left, one of the Prime Ministers Conducted them to the Throne, where after a profound Reverence delivered their Credentials, which were read ; after which the first Ambassador, being the Wayvode *Wylinski* for *Poland*, Commenced his Speech in Latin ; and having Extolled the King's Person, and his great Qualities, he intimated the reasons of their Arival. The 2<sup>d</sup> Ambassador having the Wayvode of *Witegiski* for *Lithuania*, did the like ; as did also the 3<sup>d</sup> Ambassador, who is the *Starost* of *Zydaizow*, in the Name of the Nobility. Then the King commanded the Baron Fleming to Answer them in Latin.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> the new King with the Court, and the *Embassy* broke up from *Tarnowitz* for the Fronters of *Poland* in order to go to *Crakaw*, where he is to be Crowned the 15<sup>th</sup> of *September* : He is to be called *Augustus* the Second.

Since the new King is arrived at *Crakaw*, where he was received with the Loud Acclamations of the People ; and he has Drawn together there upwards of 20000 Men, and is Disposing all things for his Coronation, having sworn to the *Pacta Conventa*.

Yet



Yet notwithstanding, the Cardinal Primate does not desist from promoting the interest of the Prince of *Conti*, having summoned the Nobility to meet the 26th. of August, pretending to proceed to a new Election, but it will signify nothing; the Elector of *Saxony* having already possession, not only of the Kingdom, but also of the Crown; and on the other hand, the *Czar* of *Muscovy* offers to assist him with 60000 Men to make good his pretentions, and the Elector of *Brandenburgh* with 16000. So that we may conclude, that this Election will terminate without the Effusion of Blood in Favour of his Electoral Highness now King of *Poland*.

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**F I N I S.**